

a work of reference which will be in much demand but which on account of its costliness will be available to but few who have not access to the larger scientific libraries.—W. S.

**Reichenow's 'Die Vögel.'**<sup>1</sup>—The subtitle 'Handbook of Systematic Ornithology' well defines this important work. We have had numerous works on birds in which the families and some of the leading genera and species are described but which make no pretence of completeness beyond the higher groups. There are also Hand-Lists of species which are merely lists with the briefest possible statement of geographical distribution. Here, however, is a work which presents the bird life of the world in systematic order and attempts to mention all the more distinct species by name with a brief description and statement of geographic range, presented in the case of the larger genera in the form of a 'key.' There are full diagnoses of families, subfamilies and genera accompanied frequently by keys while numerous text figures and references to other works add to the utility of the text.

The author has had to use his own judgment as to how many species deserve mention under each genus, and as this is purely a matter of personal opinion, others will of course differ with him in some cases. Under *Buteo* the North American species mentioned are *borealis*, *swainsoni*, *brachyurus* and *albicaudatus*, but *lineatus* and *platypterus* are omitted. This is perhaps an oversight as such closely related forms as *Archibuteo lagopus* and *sancti-johannis* both appear.

On the whole however Dr. Reichenow has, we think, been very successful in his difficult undertaking. With the constantly increasing number of geographic races that are being named — many of them binomially — it is becoming more and more necessary, for practical purposes, to have the more obviously distinct forms picked out in some way or other, and the present attempt is therefore particularly welcome. As an indication of how complete Dr. Reichenow's treatment is I have compared the number of species mentioned by him under several families with those given in Sharpe's Hand-List. The latter, of course, includes numerous slightly differentiated subspecies which naturally have no place in a work such as 'Die Vögel.'

Platyceceidæ	Reichenow	73,	Sharpe	84
Carpophagidæ	"	75	"	81
Ibididæ	"	28	"	34
Colymbidæ	"	18	"	25

In the matter of genera the author is decidedly conservative while in his nomenclature he fails to follow the International Code. We find *Vultur*

<sup>1</sup> Die Vögel. Handbuch der systematischen Ornithologie von Anton Reichenow. Zwei Bände.— Erster Band, mit einer Karte und 185 Textbildern nach der Natur gezeichnet von G. Krause. Stuttgart. Verlag von Ferdinand Enke. 1913. Roy. 8vo. pp. 1-529. Price, 15 marks. The Second Volume to appear in the summer of 1914.

retained for *V. monachus*, *Strix* for the Barn Owls, *Merganser* and *Mergus* for two different genera, *Mycteria* for the Jabiru, *Tantalus* for the Wood Ibis, etc., etc. It is unfortunate that in such an excellent work as 'Die Vögel', which could do so much towards uniformity in nomenclature, the modern system should not be adopted. The classification is also conservative and many generally accepted relationships are not admitted. The Owls still remain among the Birds of Prey, the Pigeons and Sand Grouse are separated by the Phasianidæ, while the Gulls and Shore-birds are widely separated, etc.

An introduction covering pp. 1-67 treats briefly of structure, classification, zoögeography, nomenclature etc. with a useful concordance of the names of the various parts of a bird in Latin, German, English, French and Italian.

Altogether 'Die Vögel' promises to be one of the standard works of reference on the birds of the world from the systematic standpoint, and contains more information of this kind than any other book of the same size — more probably than any other work except the 'British Museum Catalogue' or the still uncompleted 'Tierreich.'— W. S.

'**Oologia Neerlandica.**' — The four parts of Mr. Van Pelt Lechner's work which have appeared since our last notice bring this admirable publication to completion. The unusually high standard of both plates and letter press is fully maintained and the work will take its place as one of the noteworthy publications dealing with birds' eggs — an example of what can be done in scientific oölogical investigation.

These parts deal largely with the Terns, Shore-birds, Rails, Herons, etc., and the plates are particularly handsome. Some of them are identical with, or very closely related to, American species and hence the discussion of the coloration of their eggs and the characters by which they may be distinguished are of great interest to American oölogists. Still more interesting however are the discussions of shell layers of the Falconidæ and other groups and the generic characters which their coloration furnishes, *Buteo* and *Accipiter* for instance have the first layer green and the second white, while in *Falco* both are white, the latter colored superficially. In all the *Falconidæ* there is a third thin layer of mucus which bears spots in all the genera mentioned. The author points out the errors that have resulted in making gross comparisons between the eggs of certain species, when the colorations compared arise from different shell layers and are therefore not comparable. In comparing eggs of *Coturnix* and *Perdix* the author finds that the spots on the eggs of the former are contained in a superficial layer of gluten, under which is an unspotted layer, yellowish or grayish brown in color, which corresponds with the surface layer of the *Perdix* eggs. The fun-

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<sup>1</sup> "Oologia Neerlandica" Eggs of Birds Breeding in the Netherlands. By A. A. Van Pelt Lechner. Parts IV-VII. Jan., Aug., and Nov. 1913, and Feb., 1914.